

The War of Nature's Bane

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Summary: This is my first story with the crossover series of Rise of the Tangled Brave Frozen Dragons. I will be adding chapters to this so please read this and let me know what you guys think by leaving a review, PM, etc.

1. Chapter 1

Pitch stood at the altar and began the experiment. He raised his hands and closed his eyes and focused on the fear. Slowly black sand seeped from all around and began to swirl around him and the ceremony circle. With each grain that joined in the miniature storm, a fear that a person held joined in as well and Pitch could hear them all. He heard what the men, women, and children of the world feared but he blocked out the sounds of their voices to focus on the task at hand. As he increased his focus on the goal he placed before him the sand responded to his wishes and it began to twirl faster and faster creating a hurricane in his dark and twisted dungeon home. The sand spun faster and spread to all the corners of the room but as the speed picked up each grain of sand released the fear it held inside in the sound of a scream. Slowly there were more voices joining in and it became a maddening symphony of fear and agony.

Pitch lowered his arms and opened his eyes to view his handiwork and was smiled a crooked smile. "Beautiful," he said.

Getting back to the task at hand, Pitch walked to the center of the ceremony circle and placed a small vial, filled with dust, in the center of the circle on the floor. Before leaving the circle to return to the altar he took out another small vile filled with crimson blood. Opening the two vials he poured the blood of his old acquaintance into her ashes and returned to the altar to wait for the ceremony to be completed. Suddenly a brilliant flash of light consumed the entire room and the symphony of sorrows was silenced, when the light faded away and the dungeon returned to its dark and frightening appearance the sand cleared away leaving a body covered by a cloak laying in the circle. Pitch looked down at the body and

let out a sigh and said, "Are you just going to lay there?"

"Humph, you never let me relax Pitchy. Weren't you ever told that women need their beauty sleep," the figure asked as she slowly rose from the ground.

"If that were true then you wouldn't have needed that flower I provided for you all those years ago." Pitch commented as he went down the steps to help his guest, "But then again, even with all those years I gave you it doesn't look like you did much sleeping. Actuallyâ€¦I think I see some crow's feet."

Gothel immediately spun around and slapped Pitch across the face and he simply turned back to look at her face. It was true that without the flower she had begun to age and wither due to so many years of using the flower's power but due to Pitch's timely rescue he managed to preserve her by making it appear as though she turned to dust. "Oh Gothy, is that anyway to repay the person who saved your life?"

Gothel simply turned her back to him and began to make her way towards the chambers she always used when visiting Pitch in his "secure" home. "What if I told you that you didn't need the flower and that girl any longer," Pitch asked.

"It doesn't matter anymore. The power has been cut away and that girl is back with her family in the palace, rejoicing my absence," Gothel called back as she started to leave the room not looking back to answer.

"Let me rephrase the question," Pitch said. "What if you could just simply be immortal and not have to scour the world looking for yet another item or substance that will sustain your life?"

This caught Gothel's attention and she turned back to look at Pitch to see if he was simply playing her again. But his eyes were cold and hollowâ€¦but they were also serious in his question. "I'm listening," Gothel said.

Pitch gave another crooked smile and motioned for her to follow him the doors behind him. Silently she followed wondering what game he was trying to play with her. After knowing each other for so many centuries she knew that Pitch always loved to have fun toying with people's weaknesses and fears, and he had done so with her more than once, but from the look in his eyes she could tell he actually had something for her.

After passing through several ominous hallways they stopped at a gigantic pair of onyx doors that shimmered in the pale light of the moon, or whatever was left of it so far due to the ongoing eclipse. Pitch took no time to admire the doors and pushed through them revealing a room that was covered in the roots of trees that grew in the forest above the hidden lair. In the center of the room a demented pedestal of withered and dead tree roots held up a gigantic black crystal the size of a football. Without warning Pitch opened a skylight that allowed them to view the nighttime sky and instantly her eyes were drawn to the moon as it faced directly above them as if it were staring at them from above. Gothel looked to Pitch for an explanation but he put a finger to his mouth, signaling her to stay silent and she obeyed. Pitch took a deep breath and looked up at the

moon as it was covered in shadow completely and said, "I have brought her."

Instantly the crystal lit up with a radiating white light signaling the life inside the ancient gemstone. Gothel jumped back in surprise but Pitch was unfazed and walked up to it and placed his hand on it and lowered his head and said, "Yes, she is right here before the crystal."

With that the white light began to flash and Pitch stepped away in amazement as the crystal projected an image above itself. In the light it shined a black figure in a cloak appeared and was the size of a tire but Gothel could not see who it was because the figure's hood was up and it had its back to them. But slowly it spun around and removed its hood to reveal a younger looking Gothel and the actual woman looked to Pitch for an explanation. Smiling in his crooked, chilling way he walked towards her and placed an arm around her shoulders and said:

"How would you like to be a Guardian?"

2. Chapter 2

Several months later in the modern day and age:

Jack watched the skyline of New York City from the Empire State Building as the sun began to set signaling end of the autumn months. With this Jack leapt from the balcony and soared above the building, riding on the Northern winds that were at his command. Carrying with the cold gusts of wind were the large gray clouds that carried millions of snowflakes waiting to be released upon the city. Looking up to the skies he commanded the winds to carry him to the clouds, as he reached them he flipped upside down and ran across the bottom of the clouds dragging his staff through them and releasing the snowflakes from them. Once he finished this he rode the winds down to the streets and store fronts to continue his work. Gliding in the middle of the street with his arms outstretched he directed waves of frost to cover the windows and lights of the cars and buildings. "Mommy! Daddy! Look it's Jack Frost!"

Jack turned to the source of the voice and saw a little girl holding the hand of her mother and father trying to get them to turn and see him. The girl's parents stopped their conversation and looked down at their daughter then to the spot where Jack stood but they could not see him, instead all they saw was the first few snowflakes as they began to land on the pavement. "You're right honey. It looks like winter is about to begin. I know, how about when we get home we'll have some hot chocolate?" her father said.

"Yes please!" exclaimed the girl. With that the family began to walk down the street to their car but the little girl looked over her shoulder never breaking eye contact with Jack. Jack glided over to her and the little girl's eye lit up with wonder and amazement at the being before her, but Jack just smiled down at her as he soared over their heads and waved goodbye.

After several hours of soaring and gliding through the streets of New York Jack had finished covering the city with the first signs of winter. Watching from the balcony of Empire State Building once

again, he gazed out over the city but looked up to see moon half covered in shadows but still he smiled up at The Man in the Moon. Behind him a large portal opened up behind him that nearly knocked him from the balcony from the sudden disturbance of the formerly peaceful night. "Would you mind tellin' me why I have to be the one to drag him back?"

"I am going with you, so stop complaining."

Out of the portal came two of Jack's friends, The Easter Bunny and The Tooth Fairy. "Well what can I do for you two on such a fine evening," Jack asked.

"Jack," Toothiana said, "we need you to come with us back to North's workshop. There may be a problem."

"Alright let's go," Jack said, stepping down from the balcony and walking towards the portal.

"One last thing," the Easter Bunny said. Jack turned around to see him hop forward and reach for something in his traveling bag. A moment later the Easter Bunny presented Jack with a small, gold necklace with a pendant the size of a quarter but with some strange symbol that Jack didn't recognize. "I was told by one of our allies that I was to give you this."

Jack took the necklace and inspected the pendant, "Umm, alright but what is it for and since when do we have allies? Is it another Guardian?"

Toothiana hovered over on her wings and said, "We'll be able to answer both of those questions and anymore that you might have but for now we have to go, the others are waiting for us."

Without any delay the three Guardians rushed through the portal resembling the Northern Lights and found themselves in the middle of North's toy factory. All of the Yeti's were busy at work building and decorating the toys that would be delivered to the boys and girls in a few short months while the elves rushed around causing small messes as they rushed about the factory. "Ah! There they are," exclaimed a thunderous voice, "hurry up here so we can get started."

Jack turned to see North looking down at them from another level of the factory with a wide grin hidden amongst his snow white beard. Beside him stood Sandman trying to keep himself awake as usual but still pleased to see his friends none the less. After the formalities and greetings ended North led them all into a room next to his own private workshop where he tinkered away at new ideas for toys. Inside the room he led them through was a large circular table that had an opening in the middle, the room itself was covered with pictures of them all throughout history as well as other mementos and personal photographs but one wall was made up of glass to overlook the factory, ceremony circle and the large globe in the center of the building. Inside the room at one of the windows stood an old withered man with a ragged cloak over his head and a holding tightly to a staff in one of his hands, but before Jack could even question who the mysterious man was or his intention North exclaimed in a booming voice, "Fellow Guardians, we are brought together on this day to discuss a threat that may be looming on the horizon."

"And with only a month or so from Christmas, now you know how I felt when we were called back before Easter," Bunny said with a grin across his face. The other Guardians couldn't help but laugh at this but it was cut short by the man the ragged cloak.

"SILENCE," he exclaimed and the entire room went silent, Jack was the most nervous of all because he did not know anything about any sort of looming threat and because of the outburst by the old man.

"We're sorry old friend please what do you have for us," North asked

The old man made his way over to the table but took his staff and flipped it so that it rested on his shoulder revealing the blade of a scythe with a beautifully articulate pattern across the blade and parts of the wood. Lifting his hood revealed the face of an old man with a long white beard the rivaled North's and a look in his eyes that knew he wouldn't last much longer in this world. Jack was still at a loss for what was going on and said, "Can someone tell me who this guy is because that scythe is not helping."

The old man looked to Jack with his tired eyes that seemed to look into Jack's very soul and he simply smiled at him with friendly, calming look in his eyes replacing the deep, sorrowful eyes a second before. Reaching out with his other hand to shake Jack's the old man said, "At last we meet Jack Frost, and it is a pleasure. I am Father Time or Tempus, whichever you prefer."

Jack took the old man's hand and shook it noticing a gold bracelet with a chain attached to it holding a large hourglass to it. "Um, it's nice to meet you too, Tempus."

Without saying another word Tempus leaped over the table to stand in the center and looked to the Guardians and began, "My friends I fear that the flow of time has been disrupted by a force that I cannot see. Several hourglasses that have had their sands run out have gone in reverse and have somehow stopped, each at a different point of the person's life."

Everyone including Jack, who understood the basics of Tempus and the hourglasses from modern day interpretations, was shocked by the news and looked to one another for an answer to the situation but before they could ask Tempus continued his report, "The worse part of it all is that each of the hourglasses so far have been from the Dark Archives."

This caused even more concern to appear on the Guardians, except for Jack who asked, "What are the Dark Archives?"

With a kind smile, Tempus turned to Jack and replied by saying, "The Dark Archives are the halls of my temple that house hourglasses of those who spread destruction, sadness, and chaos are. The one thing is that the hourglasses of those that are far more evil are stored further back thus creating the Dark Archives."

Before Jack could ask anything else about Tempus's temple, North stood from his seat and leaned towards Tempus with a concern yet angry look in his eyes and asked, "Whose were they?"

The friendly smile on Tempus's face disappeared and with a serious

tone he said, "Only three so far, but I fear there may be more-"

"Whose," North stated again.

With a sigh Tempus said, "Gothel of Corona, Mor'du of the Lost Kingdom, and the madman Drago Bludvist."

3. Chapter 3

Jack nearly fell back out of his chair as the other members of the Guardians yelled out a simultaneous, "WHAT?!"

Bunny and Toothiana looked at each other with shocked expressions while bickering about what it could mean and Sandy began to make images with his sand, faster than Jack could interoperate. North pounded his fist into the desk causing the wood to start to split beneath his mighty fist which silenced the other Guardians. "Friends, please let Tempus finish his report."

With that all the attention in the room went back to Tempus to learn if anything else had happened that they should know about. But to Jack's surprise instead of the old, withered man that he had met a few minutes before was replaced by a young child. The child couldn't have been more than ten years old yet there he stood with the safe scythe and hourglass bracelet that Tempus wore, as well as an oversized cloak. "Whoa," Jack exclaimed. "What happened to Tempus?!"

The young boy simply turned to Jack with a kind expression and said, "As the flow of time continues, my young friend so does my eternal life but it flows forward just like any mortal creature. I start as a young boy later on I transform into an adult then I turn into the frail old man that you just saw."

Jack nodded with a cheesy, fake grin acting as if he understood what young Tempus had just told him and turned towards the other Guardians pleading with his eyes for a better explanation. "Oh for crying out loud Jack! He ages continuously, is it that hard to understand," Bunny asked with a frustrated scowl.

"Hey be nice to him, he's still learning about all of this. I mean he still doesn't even know about our allies, history or even the other potentials of the prophecy," Toothiana piped in. But once she finished her sentence her expression quickly turned bashful and looked towards North with a blushed, timid face. "Oops," she said.

North simply slapped his forehead with the palm of his hand and rose from his seat to go to the pedestal where a large book, similar to the Guardian book laid unopened and sealed with a large buckle. Jack simply looked back and forth between the faces of his friends just as confused as ever, waiting for some form of an explanation to what was going on but all he saw were grim, terrified faces. Bunny leaned back in his chair with a deep scowl while crossing his arms across his chest while Toothiana was nervously biting her nails and looking around as if trying to find the best window to break through to fly away. Meanwhile Sandy was fast asleep again and had started to hover over his chair again; obviously they weren't going to provide any

answers so Jack turned to Tempus and North who had sat back down in his seat with the large silver book in front of him.

Growing frustrated Jack exclaimed, "Can someone clue me in to what is going on here?!"

Young Tempus chuckled and put a calming hand on Jack's shoulder and said, "How about a history lesson?"

Jack turned to the young child with a confused stare but somehow felt by relieved by seeing a young face that he could relate to and he said with a smirk, "Yeah, that's exactly what I'd want to do with my immortality, be lectured."

The young spirit of time smiled and nodded his head towards North who had opened the book and was smiling at whatever was on the pages. He looked up at Jack with the jolly look in his eye and began, "My young friend, we are the Guardians who are tasked with protecting the light that children provide in the world. We are chosen by The Man in the Moon as you know but what you don't know is why there are so many other spirits yet only us five Guardians."

Jack simply leaned back and thought about the statement. In his three hundred years of being a spirit he had met plenty of other spirits, most of the time not in the best of circumstances but still he had met plenty yet what North said was true. There were only four, now five, Guardians out of the dozens of spirits that he had met in his lifespan but his train of thought was cut off as North continued, "Let me show you something."

With that he waved his hand over the images on the pages and they shimmered to life as if they were from the Northern Lights. The four images were of each of the Guardians: North in his favorite coat and black fur hat with a sack of toys over his shoulder, Toothiana gliding through the air with a tooth in one hand and shiny quarter in another, Sandy standing on top of a large cloud of sand directing the flow of dream sand as if he were a symphony conductor, but the last image of Bunny hopping with a large basket full of brightly colored eggs made Jack chuckle. "Watch it mate," Bunny said.

North smiled and continued his speech, "Each of us represent an aspect of childhood or a trait that make children bright or perhaps a better way to say this is that all of us provide something for children that allow them to express themselves in a positive form and we also allow them to grow into wonderful people."

"You do realize you explained all of this to me earlier with that whole 'What is your center?' shtick you know," Jack interjected with a smirk.

North smiled and simply nodded, "Yes, our centers. These are what we give to the world and help it to prosper in some form or another but the other spirits throughout the world that you have met give something that doesn't serve children alone, they give something to the world that can be used in a variety of different ways that prevent them from becoming Guardians." Finishing this statement he waved his large hand over the pages and the images transformed into shimmering pictures of Cupid and the Leprechaun. "For example, luck and love aren't things that a child would consider yet a teenager and anyone older would think about these things. The same goes for you

and your center which is fun."

Jack looked back to North with a confused look and he said, "What I'm trying to tell you is that while you are a Guardian who has sworn to protect the light of the children, your ability to provide fun to the world can be used for so much more and it is the goal of Pitch and this team he is assembling to get rid of you as well as the others that pose a major threat to them." Before Jack could ask if these others were the same people as the other potentials that Tooth had mentioned earlier North continued in his thick accent, "You and Pitch are equals in strength while you may not be the exact opposite of each other like Pitch and Sandy, you do threaten each other's centers which is why it is natural for you to fight him. But just like you and he are opposites, there are three others that provide wide spreading centers and threaten the powers of Pitch and his team."

"What are you saying?" Bunny asked.

North turned to him with a small grin and said, "The legend of the Dark Guardians must be true."

"I was hoping you wouldn't say that."

"What are we going to do," Toothiana said in a panicked voice.

"Excuse me, I'm still a little out of the loop here," Jack said leaning on his staff.

Toothiana fluttered over to him and said, "That book contains legends or prophecies that have guided us through the ages as well as keep track of the potential Guardians as well as regular spirits, whether they be good or bad and-"

"There is an old legend saying that you'll have to fight the Dark Guardians because you are a part of the legend," Bunny interpreted.

"Bunny," Tooth exclaimed, "I wanted to be the one to tell him that part! I swear you never give me the chance to talk in these meetings."

"I'll make it up to you by flossing again, okay? Can we call it square?"

"YOU STOPPED?!"

"Enough you two, we'll have our oral checkups after we finish with the business at hand but for now Jack needs to know the prophecy if he is to be prepared for the fight that is ahead of him." Tempus turned to North in the form of a twenty year old man and said, "Show him."

4. Chapter 4

North simply nodded and unclipped the buckled that sealed the ancient book and turned to a page marked by a large silver ribbon. Bunny returned to his seat at the table from closing the curtains and North

waved his hand over the page and began to recite the prophecy as shimmering images danced around the room illustrating the text.

During the time of light and peace darkness shall run rampant.

Those of light shall be destroyed and the world will then be dimmed.

The ones of the darkest hearts shall take their place and the Dark Ages will resume.

Only by the light of four is there a chance to fight.

Guided by the roots of her shall the four be revealed and blessed with her righteous seal can they out shine the night.

Find the four throughout the year and show them to her throne.

With the righteous brand and blinding light can the darkness be withdrawn.

With that North closed the book and Bunny opened the curtains to let the light in but no one said a word. All eyes were on Jack as they waited for a reply. He looked up to North and asked, "Did you know it would be me?"

North nodded and said, "Yes. During the part of the prophecy that says to 'find the four throughout the year,' we originally took that in a literal sense and searched for you and the others. But after a while it seemed impossible so we stopped looking and focused on what could be done to fix the problems at hand. At least until we met Mother Nature."

Bunny spoke this time before Jack could ask North anything else, "Look at the medallion on the necklace."

Jack didn't question and took the necklace out of his pocket and set it on the table. Bunny picked it up and examined it in his paws and said, "Many years ago she came to us badly wounded but she wouldn't tell us by who or how. Now that I think back on it she barely said anything at all to us, she just wandered in here when we were having a meeting and gave each of us a necklace. She said these are for the four of nature. We each took one and gave them to the spirit we knew to be of the chosen four."

"How did you know I would be one of them," Jack asked still confused about how everyone knew he was involved.

Bunny tossed the necklace back to him and said, "Look at the symbols around the edges."

He caught it and stared closely at the images etched into the gold medallion. In the center of the medallion was an image of the world with four distinct symbols: a sun, a flower, a leaf, and a snowflake. Jack looked up from the necklace and said, "Oh."

"Exactly," Bunny said. "Are we took another look at the prophecy and the necklaces MN gave us we managed to figure it out."

"So what am I supposed to do?"

This time Toothiana answered with a wide smile and cheerful gaze. "Well you were the last one we needed to find and now here you are. We each delivered a necklace to the other three and now that we know you are a part of the prophecy now we can call them all together and-

"Wellâ€|maybe not all of us," North said as he looked away twiddling with his thumbs.

"North," Toothiana said. She spoke as if she were a mother rebuking her child for something they had done wrong and fell over to him with her arms folded and a stern look in her eyes. "North, what did you do?"

Sinking lower into his chair his mouth became hidden under his beard and said, "I may have not given Autumn his necklace yet."

Bunny rose from his seat and exclaimed, "Why didn't you give it to him?! We need all four of them to know!"

"Well when was I supposed to do it? It's three days from Christmas and I still have preparations to make."

Letting out an aggravated sigh Bunny sat down and said, "Well go, just do it now. You helped with Easter so I might as well return the favor."

"I'll help as well," Toothiana said. "Besides I have a few fairies that are free and might be willing to help."

"As will I," Tempus said back in his old man form. Even Sandy floated over and gave a salute to show he was ready to work.

North smiled and said, "Thank you friends, but what about the other two?"

Bunny rose from his seat and said, "I can go to both of them and bring them here to help since we were going to get them to come here anyway to unite the team."

North pondered this and said after a short pause, "Alright I'll be back soon."

But before everyone could leave to go and begin working on the preparations needed for North's annual delivery run Jack said, "Why don't I take it to Autumn and North can stay to help-"

"NO!" They all exclaimed. Jack looked around taken aback to the outburst that his small suggestion had caused. Everyone's eyes were wide with shock and fear as if Jack had grown a second head but had red fiery hair instead of his usual bleached white hair. North walked towards Jack and put a hand on his shoulder and tried to speak but no words would come out. He rubbed his neck and looked to the others for some help but nobody said a word. Jack stood there with North's hand on his shoulder waiting and said, "Well if nobody can give me a reason not to I might as well go visit Autumn."

"Jack don't," North's grip had tightened on his shoulder and the look

in his eyes became deadly serious. He let out a sigh and continued, "Autumn isn't really one for visitors, especially when its people that he doesn't know."

Jack released himself from North's grip and said, "Well why not? If I'm supposed to team up with him and two other people I should go and meet him."

Nobody could fight with that simple fact and Jack knew it. Folded his arms across his chest with a confident smirk across his face and North let out a sigh and rubbed his eyes trying to find something to argue with. But after a pause he motioned for the others to leave and to get ready for Christmas. "North are you sure about this," Toothiana asked.

"He'll have to meet him sooner or later so it might as well be sooner."

Without saying another word Bunny summoned a hole and jumped down to go and gather the other two from the prophecy. Tooth and the others left the small room and went to go start the remaining preparations but the chilling tension never left the room but it didn't stay long as North clapped his hands and his normal jolly demeanor returned. He turned to Jack and said, "Alright Jack it's time for you to see where, or who, you borrow the wind from."

With that North simply turned to the door and started walking and Jack followed with a small grin. "Wait. What do you mean by 'borrow,'" Jack asked as he chased after North to catch up with him.

5. Chapter 5

After the reindeer were put into position and the sleigh was placed ready for takeoff, North boarded his sleigh wearing his coat, fur hat, his two swords placed in his belt and a deadly stare in his eyes. Jack followed cautiously behind him and took his seat in the sleigh wondering about what kind of person Autumn could be. What could be so bad about him? Out of all encounters with other spirits the only bad one was Pitch but based off of everyone's reaction to his suggestion earlier, you would think that between Pitch and his nightmare steeds or Autumn, they'd risk fighting Pitch in a heartbeat. But Jack was still left wondering why everyone feared a guy named Autumn instead of the man who is the king of nightmares and fear itself. What could he have done or do that makes everyone think he is the most dangerous being on the planet?

In fact it wasn't even the mystery of Autumn that's bothering him. It was the fact that he was a part of a prophecy that cast him with three people whom he had never met. Yet they were somehow going to defeat Pitch and his new team with the help of Mother Nature. Being told all of this in less than an hour tends to be overwhelming to a person but Jack was brought out of his train of thought as North called out to his team and they took off into the sky.

Once they were in the sky North spoke in a dry tone and said, "The Guardian of Trust."

"What," Jack said confused about the sudden statement.

"That is Autumn's center."

Jack sat there perplexed by North's random statement but before he could ask anything else North threw one of his enchanted snow globes and it exploded into a swirling portal of dazzling lights. As they flew through the portal and out the exit Jack leapt to the side of the sleight to look at his surroundings but what he saw was not what he expected. Over the course of his 300 years Jack had traveled to almost every part of the world and had visited various spirits in their homes—most of the times the visit consisted of apologies and attempts to escape consequences but that was beside the point. In every home that was inhabited by a powerful spirit their home reflected what they give or represent in the world, but as a spirit that represents 'trust' this was the last kind of place that Jack would think to look for the spirit.

Along the miles upon miles of thrashing waves and hounding winds was a deserted yet peaceful island filled with luscious forests and snowcapped mountains. North brought the sleigh closer and the peaceful serenity of the island slowly faded away as the outlines of a village came into view. Or the better way to describe it would be what had once been a village. Jack leaped up to perch himself on the edge of the sleigh to get a better view of ruins beneath them. Everywhere he looked all that could see was the charred remains of homes and stores littered across the ground. Large boulders and the rubble of statues were scattered and lodged into the earth among the various rusted swords and shields that were laid delicately against them. Jack jumped off of the sleigh and glided down and landed in the middle of the vast village and walked towards one of the massive boulders that was surrounded by weaponry and knelt before one of the shields to better examine it laying his staff beside him. He extended his arm and was about to touch the shield but was stopped by the strong grip of St. Nick who pulled Jack away from the massive stone. "What do you think you are doing?!"

"What? What did I do?"

"If you took some time to look closer at what's around then you might be able to figure it out," North said. With that he released Jack's arm and went back to the stone to retrieve Jack's staff. As he knelt down to grab the staff North looked up towards the stone and cleared away some of the moss that encased the stone and let out a heavy sigh. Under the green moss were dozens upon dozens of engravings in a language that Jack couldn't understand but North stood there for a moment before turning back to Jack and bowed to the rock.

"What happened here," Jack asked.

"War," North said in a dry, defeated tone. He then turned back and walked towards Jack handed him his staff and patted him on his shoulder. "Come along we have to go and get Autumn."

North passed by him and began to ascend a large stairwell that had large chunks of rock missing and was stained with the blood of those that met their end during the war. Jack pulled up his hood to hide his grim expression and followed North up the stairs with his staff over his shoulders. Once Jack was beside North at the top of the stairs they pushed open the two massive rotting doors and entered a dimly lit room. "Stay close beside me and don't touch

anything."

Jack simply nodded and followed close beside him as they found a torch and lit it. North led the way through what might have once been a great hall of some sorts, towards another smaller door in the back of the vast room. As Jack followed he noticed the broken tables and benches across the floor and decorations and tattered paintings on the walls. All across the vast room there were more stains of war and weapons of fallen warriors scattered and shattered everywhere. Swords, axes and arrows were lodged into the massive pillars supporting the crumbling stone ceiling that had moss growing and hanging from the ceiling from the openings in the ceiling. Towards the back of the room before the small door was a long table elevated above the rest of the floor by a rotting wooden stage. In front of the long wooden table was a rusted statue of a dragon that had fallen and smashed into the wood and caused it to break and splinter. Behind the long rotting table were large tapestries that were worn away by time and damaged from the war that occurred and the images displayed were far beyond distinguishable. North reached the door beneath one of the tapestries and unlocked it with a key he had taken out of his coat pocket and said, "This is the part I always hate the most."

"Why's that," Jack asked following behind North.

"Have a look." North said as he stepped aside for Jack to look into the dark room. Once inside with North holding the torch up to illuminate the room Jack understood and let out a sigh. With the room illuminated Jack realized that the room wasn't even a room but a large passageway with a long stone carved stairway leading upwards and with no end in sight. "These stairs are always causing me pain in my knees."

"Are you sure that there isn't some other way up? Like an escalator or better yet why can't we use one of your snow globes?" Jack asked looking up at the endless flight of stairs.

"Oh sure we could. If we do that though then we will have to take the full flight back to the Pole."

"About how long are we talking," Jack said as they began going up the stairs, "because we just started going up these and I'm already bored and tired. Actually, why did you only bring two snow globes?!"

"Just about six or seven hours because of the weather and I knew this would be a quick trip so we wouldn't need more than that," North said as he passed by a stunned Jack.

Jack watched as North passed by him with a kind smile and a small laugh. Shaking it off Jack let out a sigh and put a smile back on and began to leap from step to step easily passing by North. "See you at the top old man!"

About an hour later North was sitting on a rock at the top of the stairway followed by Jack heaving heavily from attempting to run up the long steep passage. Once he reached the top of the stairs Jack collapsed to the ground on his back from exhaustion. North stood above him and pulled a canteen of water from his coat and offered it to Jack who eagerly accepted it and began choking down large sips of water to help him regain his energy. When he finished drinking all of

the water he looked back to return it to North but he was nowhere to be seen. Quickly Jack leapt to his feet, kicking his staff up to catch and began walking to try and find where North had gone. Surrounding the cave that the stairs ended in, were tall trees that appeared to stab at the dark ominous clouds as if the island was trying to show that there was still life on the barren deserted island. The ground was covered in luscious grass and various other bushes and plants, but in the middle of it all was one dirt path. Jack decided to follow the path through the woods and came to a clearing with North standing in the middle of it with his arms folded across his chest. "There you are." Jack said as he approached North and handed him his canteen.

North turned around at the sound of Jack's voice and with a small smile took the canteen and placed it back into the pocket of his jacket and asked, "Are you ready to move forward? We are practically at Autumn's home."

"How much further is it?" Jack asked as the two began to walk again.

"From here we keep moving forward and once we pass the sign it should only be a few minutes until we reach his house." North replied as he looked to Jack with his usual kind and welcoming gaze.

"A sign?" Jack asked, "Why is there a sign posted all the way out here?"

"You do not need to worry about it. Just keep walking and we will be there soon enough and with if things go well then we should be out of here and back to the Pole in no time."

Following shortly after the small conversation, the duo arrived at a large oak tree that was larger than all the others in the forest. On its bark was a wooded sign that was surprisingly well maintained in comparison to the rest of the sights of the island, on it was a simple brown leaf and nothing more. "Here we are! Now from here we just go down this hill and we will have arrived." North proclaimed with a pat on Jack's back and with that he led the duo down a beaten dirt path that appeared too had not been used in some time. At the end of the path was the home of Autumn but it was nothing that Jack had been expecting. Then again he didn't know what to expect since no one would tell him anything about what Autumn was like but based off of island at first glance made Jack think that he was some sort of terrifying demonic spirit that had somehow become a Guardian but from seeing his actual house Jack didn't know what to think anymore.

Before him was something more than a simple cottage in the woods, it was a mansion of amazing proportions. Made from stone and wood the building was three stories tall and was decorated with small carvings around the frames of the windows and door that curled and twisted along the borders of the frame. The only strange thing about the house, aside from the fact that it looked so out of place, was that it felt like it was deserted and barren just like the village yet there was a column of smoke rising from the chimney. "So how do we get his attention or get inside?" Jack asked, "I'm guessing since he's the Guardian of trust that we have to go through some sort of test to prove we can be trusted, so what is it? Retrieve something off of one of the points of the island? Be interrogated? Prick our

fingers so he can analyze our blood or something like that?"

"Mmmmm, something like that." North said as he walked past Jack and stopped at the door and reached up and touched the top of the frame. After a few seconds he brought his arm down with a small key in his hand and unlocked the front door. Turning back to Jack with a smile he motioned for him to enter first and said, "With that we've completed the test."

"Are you kidding me?!" Jack said with a wide eyed expression.

"Nope that's all there is to it. After you." North said with a laugh at Jack's reaction and with that the two entered the home of the fall spirit.

6. Chapter 6

The house itself was even more beautiful than what Jack had expected. Through the front door was a small entryway made of stone that stopped five feet from the door and was surrounded on both sides by a carved wooden banister. North hung his hat and coat on a matching coat rack next to the door and removed his boots and placed them on a small floor mat next to the coat rack. There was no other coat or pair of shoes to signal that someone was home, yet from the entryway was a vast living area with a grand stairwell that led to the upstairs hallways and a large fireplace. Each of these were articulately designed with great precision and care to feel welcoming to guests and residents but also strong and sturdy to support anyone that inhabited the home. The fire roared and illuminated various decorations that filled the walls; there were hand painted portraits of famous historical figures, mythical beings, and breathtaking landscapes. The most intriguing piece was the one that was carefully hung above the fireplace, the painting was of nothing as spectacular as everything else on the walls but there was something about it that drew Jack closer to examine it.

In the foremost part of the painting was a plate of half eaten food and a mug knocked over next to it, spilling its contents to the side of the table and out of view to those looking at the painting. Looking further in the painting were more plates and mugs all with different amounts of the same food yet the most beautiful thing in the portrait was the people on either side of the table. There were several on each side of the table wearing similar apparel of horned helmets and carry weapons on their persons, but the faces of the unknown Vikings told a different story. They were all smiling and laughing in the portrait, some were laughing harder than others while others blushed from being laughed at but something in one of the top corners of the painting caught Jack's attention. In the perspective of the viewer it seemed large but when placed against those in the portrait it was distant and hard to identify but it appeared to be a long black tail with a red and white sided tip at the end to match an opposing black one. There was nothing else to the portrait that caught Jack's attention but at the bottom of the frame was a small gold plate and upon closer examination was a title, engraved with fine cursive writing that read: "Our Last Supper."

"It's amazing, isn't it Jack?" North asked as he sat down in a chair close to the fire.

"Yeah but who are the people in it and what is with that weird looking tail in the top corner over there?" Jack said pointing his staff to the ominous tail.

"It is not my place to say," North said as he rose from his chair. "You'll have to ask him that when you have the chance. For now let us go upstairs, I think I know where we can find him."

With that North and Jack walked up the stairs into one of the dark hallways of the house but the mysterious painting never left Jack's mind. Through the hallway and up the last flight of stairs to the third floor was something that Jack had not expected to find; at the top of the stair was a circular metal platform with the same leaf pattern as the sign outside the house and hundreds upon hundreds of books in stacks and various shelves. The light leaked in through the windows to illuminate all sorts of paintings and designs for various machines, weapons, and types of armor. What stood out the most was the lone table surrounded by a mess of open books and crumbled up paper was a figure that appeared to be asleep from reading. North chuckled and looked at Jack with a finger to his lips and motioned for him to stay back. Quietly he crept up to the table and was about to let out a monstrous yell to startle the sleeping figure but before he could the figure sprang from his chair and around North to grab one of his arms and pin it behind his back and shove his face unto the table where he had just been. Jack witnessed this and went to rush the attacker with his staff only to be blown back by a strong gust of wind that sent him and several pieces of paper flying backwards. "You're getting clumsy old man, and since when did you need someone's help to try and get the jump on me?"

North replied with a thundering laugh as the figure let go of him and gave him a monstrous hug to which the stranger returned. "When have I ever tried to sneak up on you?"

The figure looked up at North and replied, "Well let's seeâ€|there was the time at the Pole, the time I accompanied you to the South Pole, the time you asked me to help design your sleigh, and just about any other time when you come to visit me."

"That may be true but when have I ever succeeded in getting the jump on you?"

"Not once so far but you seem pretty determined to get me at least one time."

As the happy exchange between North and the man Jack assumed to be Autumn, he stood in the spot where the wind had pushed him in confusion and surprise as to what was going on. The mysterious Autumn that everyone had warned Jack about, including North, now stood in front of him countering all of North's comment with sarcastic humor and talking about years the years that have past. Based off of his appearance he didn't even look that intimidating, his head was covered in a mess of auburn hair from sleeping on the desk. His figure was tall and scrawny but had a small layer of muscle that Jack could see from his arms in the white T-shirt he wore. He also wore a pair of athletic shorts that reached past his knees and below that surprised Jack even more; his right foot was bare but instead of finding a matching left one there was a mechanical prosthetic. Combining all of this with the combat skills Jack just witnessed and his ability to use the wind somehow, Jack was still confused about

why everyone feared him going alone. A comment from North brought Jack out of his thoughts and back into the scene, "Jack! Come and say hello to Autumn."

Jack approached him and Autumn extended his hand to shake and he did the same, his grip was firm and his rich green eyes never left Jack's. "So you are the mischievous Jack Frost that I've heard so much about. I'm Hiccup."

"Your name is Hiccup?" Jack said with a chuckle. "I thought it was Autumn, that's what North and everyone else has called you."

Hiccup let out a sigh and looked at North with an annoyed expression and said, "I thought we agreed not to call me that anymore. You all know I don't like to use that name."

North smiled and placed a hand on his shoulder and replied, "Consider it your nickname it suits you."

Hiccup sighed and rubbed his eyes, "Anyway what do you want? You don't usually visit unless it's something serious. Let me guess, the seats of your sleigh need redone? The workshop needs upgraded again?"

"It's Pitch," North said. Hiccup started to get annoyed and walked back over to his desk to close various books he had been using. "Tempus came to us and said that several hourglasses have been tampered with in the Dark Archives. We believe Pitch is building a team."

Hiccup stacked up his books and started walking around to return them to their proper places shaking his head at what North had to say. "And you want me to fight? I've told you Guardians that I don't fight anymore. I left that life behind when I died and now I'm devoted to my work. You'll have to find someone else to fill in for me."

"Mother Nature decided this," North said as he took the necklace out of his pocket and held it out for Hiccup to examine. At the mention of her name Hiccup froze and turned to look at the piece of jewelry in North's gigantic hand. Slowly he set his books unto the floor and took the necklace to get a closer examination of it. On the one side was the image of the world that matched Jack's and on the back was the same leaf pattern that was placed on the sign and floor of his home. Hiccup ran a hand through his hair and motioned for them to follow back down to the bottom floor and through the living room with the fireplace and mysterious painting. Through a door that was across the room was a large kitchen filled with top of the line cooking equipment. Hiccup set the necklace onto a large dining table and motioned for them to sit and Jack did without complaint, only wonder as to what was going through Hiccup's head and why he was so against fighting Pitch. "Start from the beginning. You two must be hungry from traveling all this way so I'll make some food while you explain the situation and what Mother Nature has to do with this."

North sat in the chair opposite of Jack and began to explain everything he had told Jack back at the Pole. As he did so Hiccup began gathering ingredients and equipment from around the kitchen and began to cook a meal. Most of the time he seemed to not even notice what North was saying because he seemed lost in his own head or just

focused more on measuring out the ingredients. From time to time he would ask a small question for some extra details but said nothing more. After an hour had passed he set the plates of food down before them, on North's it was a salad with a side of mashed potatoes and steak cubes and a small plate of cookies and a tall glass of milk. For Jack he prepared a bowl of pasta, topped with sauce and sprinkled cheese, also there was a side of bread and a glass of ice cold water. Hiccup prepared nothing for himself but took a glass of water and began to clean up the kitchen. The meal was delicious for both of the Guardians but all of the attention was focused on Hiccup as they waited for his response. North was about to take the last bite of his salad when Hiccup spoke. "You never said whose hourglasses were tampered with. Tempus usually includes all of the details in his reports to the Guardians whenever he has to make one. So who was it?"

North set his fork down and reached for his glass and said, "Gothel and Mor'du," before taking a sip of his milk.

"And who else?" Hiccup replied with an irritated tone in his voice.

North hesitated for a moment and said with a sigh, "Drago."

Jack jumped from his seat as Hiccup broke his glass in his hand. The shards scattered to the floor but for some reason there was no injury to his hand. "I'm in," Hiccup said without hesitation.

"Can someone please just tell me why it's so tense in here?! Why is Drago so much more of a big deal? Why did you guys not want me to go here alone?! Who is in that painting?! Why aren't you at least hurt from breaking that glass?!"

"Jack calm down and be polite to our host and your new teammate," North said in a stern voice.

"It's fine North," Hiccup said. "Follow me Jack, I'll answer all of your questions and any others you might have."

7. Chapter 7

****Author's Notes:** Hey guys, I wanted to apologize for not being able to post more chapters but I have been busy with college, work, musicals, and just life in general. I am sorry for taking so long but with the holidays coming up I will be able to take some to focus on writing more chapters for this and my other story as well as some other ones I am thinking of posting on the site. ******

****I also wanted to thank you guys for your patience as I struggle to find the time to post these updates but I wanted to say one quick thing; I would really appreciate some constructive criticisms in the reviews. I read them and I love seeing the reactions you guys have to each new chapter but I would really like it if you could poke some holes in the writing style or in the story itself so that I can use that to improve both of these things.**
>

****Anyway, enjoy the new chapter and I hope you all have a wonderful day! Feel free to leave a review or PM with any comments you have to**

say.**

Enjoy!

* * *

><p>Far from the shores of Hiccup's island home Bunny emerged from his tunnel deep within the forests of Brazil. The sun was high in the sky shining through the leaves of the enormous and ancient trees. Vines were laced in and amongst their branches and decorated the forest floor as if someone had sewn them through the forest in beautiful waving patterns, but the most noticeable feature of the vast forest were the new springtime flowers that completed the décor of the immense acres of wildlife. Each flower was more mesmerizing than the last because of the unique design and color that each one of them possessed. Every one of them seemed to have been plucked from a painting and delicately placed throughout the forest, much like the vines, creating a path through the twisting brush and trees. Bunny followed the newly designed trail, admiring the serenity and beauty of the forest that surrounded him as he continued on into a twisting maze of foliage. Towards the end of the path was a clearing that opened to reveal a small cascade of waterfalls falling against dark shimmering rocks scattered across the length of the falls and fell into a calm, flat plain of clear water. "Pascal wait here, this will only take a moment," said a young woman.<p>

Above the waterfall the woman stood on a branch that stretched over the rocks of the waterfall and balanced on it as she walked towards the end of it on her bare feet. She wore a light purple top with short sleeves and a pair of dark purple jeans that were rolled up just below her knees with a small leather satchel embroidered with an elegant flower design. The woman reached as far as she could by balancing across the branch and flipped her short brown hair back and tucked a single blonde braid behind her ear as she reached into her satchel. From it she brought out a small jar of paint and a brush while she unscrewed the lid from the jar, down below Bunny smiled as leaned against a tree watching the woman work at her craft.

Slowly the woman dipped her brush into the jar and painted the air around the end of the branch with light delicate strokes. With each stroke of her brush flowers and vines of magnificent design materialized onto the branch and spread across the tree. Once her piece was complete the woman smiled and walked back across the branch to a patiently waiting chameleon guarding a pair of laced sandals. "I told you it wouldn't take long," she said in a mocking tone.

The little chameleon rolled its eyes and motioned for her put her sandals on so they could be on their way through the woods. With a breathtaking smile she nodded and began to lace her sandals around her feet and tied the knots around her shins. "Yet another amazing piece, Rapunzel," Bunny called out from below.

Rapunzel squealed with delight at the sight of her old friend and began hopping from rock to rock and landed in the calm pool of water beneath the falls. Bunny embraced her at the edge of pool and she said, "I missed you! What are you doing here?"

"I've missed you too, kid. North sent me to get you and bring you back to the Pole. Pitch is making a move against MN and we need you and the others to help."

Rapunzel nodded as she reached and grabbed onto a small necklace around her neck, much like the one that Bunny gave to Jack but hers had an image of a flower engraved onto the back. Her eyes became hollow as her heart rate quickened as she asked, "What about Gothel?"

Bunny laid a paw on her shoulder as he summoned a tunnel to take them back to the Pole and said, "She might be back. But don't worry; I will not let her anywhere near you. Ever again."

Rapunzel let out a sigh of relief and hugged Bunny as thanks for his kindness and for giving her reassurance, once she exited the embrace she hopped down the hole but stopped to turn back and ask, "Is Merrida coming?"

Bunny chuckled and said, "Aye and she was more than ready to get her hands of Pitch."

At this Rapunzel giggled and said, "Is anyone else coming?"

"Well Jack and North went to talk to Autumn so they should be back shortly after we get there."

Rapunzel was silent and stared at Bunny as if he had lost his ears. Her eyes were filled with fear and worry at the mention of Autumn's name and asked, "Why is he coming?"

"Don't look at me for that one. MN picked him so we need him onboard besides it should be fine. All of that happened years ago and I'm sure that he'll play nice. If not I'll protect you, just like I always do."

Hesitantly, Rapunzel picked Pascal up and placed him on her shoulder and began her journey through the rabbit hole back to the North Pole. Bunny looked around admiring the beauty Rapunzel had created before hopping into the hole to return and finish the preparations for Christmas.

* * *

><p>Jack sat in the back of North's sleigh as the two of them waited for Hiccup to meet with them back in the ruins of the village to take off and head back to the North Pole. But not a word was spoken between the duo; North had a dark grimace across his brow while Jack sat with his hood over his head and staff against his forehead, recounting the events of Hiccup's tale. For two hours straight, Jack sat by the fire listening to the dark and twisted road that was Hiccup's life and was horrified and shocked by each turn it took into a darker and saddening world that he had to live through. How anyone had endured that was inconceivable to Jack and this train of thought was broken by North's short statement, "Jack, everything that you were told just know needs to stay private. The other members of your team have not been so lucky to have been told that tale."<p>

"How are they the lucky ones?"

"Sometimes, I question that myself." North let out a sigh and continued, "Do you understand?"

Jack let out a light chuckle and a single tear escaped his eye and said, "Yeah, my lips are sealed."

"Good now cheer up, he's coming and we have much work to do."

No sooner than the words left his mouth Hiccup appeared in the air on a pair of withered, demonic wings made up of the new autumn leaves and strong gust of wind. Landing a few feet away from the sleigh Jack could observe the strange attire he wore and the small bag he had over his shoulder. From head to toe Hiccup wore dark leather armor that held several daggers and two swords on his back. The armor itself seemed to be made a long time ago but had been updated and modified to stand the test of time. In all honesty, he looked as if he were there to take Jack's life that is how disturbing his armor appeared. It didn't help that when Jack looked into his eyes all he saw were a pair of emerald green eyes with two long black slits in the middle, like a lizards. "I'm ready to go," he said in a dry yet calm tone.

8. Chapter 8

****Author's Notes to follow.****

* * *

><p>Jack and company rose from the shores of Berk and soared through the air to a portal leading back to the North Pole. However back on the island a hulking figure emerged from the tree line watching the group disappear from the sky in a dazzling array of lights. Once the portal closed he walked with a burlap sack over his shoulder and a dragon staff in his other prosthetic arm. He entered the village and approached the memorial boulder with an angry demeanor and knelt before it to examine the weapons scattered around it. Among the weapons laid a simple brown headband with various scratches and tears from battles fought long ago. Drago smiled, remembering back to the day when he ended the life of the headband's owner.<p>

Rain crashed down onto the shores of Berk and all of his men were storming the island as they crashed with the local inhabitants. Dragons flew high above them raining fireballs down onto their warships causing heavy casualties. He rallied his troops and started to take all of the dragons down one by one as well as their owners and riders. Bodies were scattered across the beaches as their blood stained the sand. In one last charge at his men the headband's owner charged with a mighty battle cry with a battle axe in one hand and a shield in another. With three swift swipes of his staff Drago unarmed them and sent them flying back. They laid there with a gaping wound in their side as Drago approached, once he stood over them he stabbed his staff into the ground and drew a short sword from the hilt of one of the corpses. There they locked eyes but before the owner of the headband could give a final remark he ran the blade through her chest and heard her take her final breath. From across the length of the beach he saw Hiccup fall to his knees. Unfortunately the end of the battle did not go as smoothly for Drago, seeing as how he died in the process.

With a snarl Drago stuffed the headband into the sack as well as all of the other helmets and weapons scattered about the memorial boulder. Once everything was in the burlap sack Drago reached inside

of his pocket and took out a vial of black sand. Removing the cork he poured the sand around himself and waited for the magic in the sand to transport him back to the rest of the Dark Guardians. The sand rose from the ground and engulfed him with darkness and fell back to the ground but instead of falling on the soil of Berk it fell onto the cold stone floor of Pitch's lair, dimly lit by various touches in the fixtures on the walls. Shadowy figures stood in the dark as Pitch and Gothel emerged from one of the passageways, "Well," Gothel asked.

Dragon tossed the sack to Pitch who opened it and examined its contents. He drew the headband from the bag to examine it closer and handed it to Gothel. Upon her inspection Gothel smiled and said, "We have our army."

* * *

><p>Author's Notes: Hey guys!

I know that it has been a little while but I wanted to tell you guys that new chapters are coming for both of my stories. College, work, and just life in general have prevented me from writing for a long time. Luckily I have found time to write but not to type them out. So I may have ended up with fifteen pages written in my notebook but now I begin the process of typing all of these pages out and editing them.

Now the other thing I wanted to say was that you guys are great and I really want to keep up my level of writing that you guys know I can have. The only thing is that I feel like my stories could be a lot better. So I wanted to say that I am looking for a Beta Reader who can help me to edit and improve the stories. If you know of anyone or would like to be my Beta Reader please let me know and PM me.

Thanks for reading!

9. Chapter 9

"Welcome back to the North Pole," Bunny said as he helped Rapunzel out of the rabbit hole. At first she was blinded by the change in lighting but as her eyes adjusted she was amazed once again by the new magical environment. Yeti's worked diligently as they crafted toys for the girls and boys while elves ran around carrying out their usual hijinks.

"It's just as beautiful as I remember," she said.

"Well Christmas is pretty soonâ€¦how would you like to help wrap the presents?"

Rapunzel's eyes lit up and she dashed up a flight of stairs to where a group of yeti's sat at wrapping stations hard at work. But at one of the stations sat a young woman with fiery red hair and a quiver with an image of a sun carved on it and a bow beside her station. "Merida?" Rapunzel asked as she approached the table.

Merida turned at the call of her name but before she could identify the source she was locked into a hug with Rapunzel. "Okay, okay

Rapunzel, ah missed ya too. Now would ye mind lettin me go? Ah need to breathe."

Rapunzel did as she asked with a smile and the two started talking to catch up with what the other one has been doing. Many years had passed since they last spoke with one another but Merida still had her tomboyish style. She wore a pair of black combat boots with jeans, a white top, and an army jacket with three pins on the left side. "Can you believe it's really time," Rapunzel asked as she slowly tied a bow on another present.

Merida looked at Rapunzel and saw the pain and fear start to appear in her eyes. She grabbed her hand to calm her down and said, "I'm still tryin' to grasp that myself. We knew it would come sooner or later but are you sure you can work with Autumn around?"

"I don't know. I still have nightmares about what happened from time to time. What about you?"

"How could I not? He nearly killed us both." Merida said as she started wrapping another gift. "I'll protect you if you protect me, kay?"

"Of course!" Rapunzel said as she embraced her again.

As they got back to wrapping the presents North burst through the doors and exclaimed in a joyous, thundering voice and said, "Let us get ready for Christmas!"

Rapunzel and Merida jumped from their seats and looked down from the balcony to see North and Jack enter the workshop, followed slowly by Autumn dressed in his dark leather armor. North saw them and met them at the bottom of the steps and gave them both a great warm hug. "I'm glad you both could come to help. Both with my preparations for Christmas and with our situation with Pitch."

"Anytime North but umâ€¦" Rapunzel started to say but as Autumn got closer.

"What is it child," North asked as he placed a hand on her shoulder.

"We don't know if we can trust Autumn!" Merida said, making the room go silent.

Autumn turned and went back to the stables and North sighed and turned back to the girls and said, "I wouldn't have brought him if I thought he would put your lives in danger. I can assure you that he won't hurt you."

"How can ye be sure?" Merida asked.

"Autumn has changed for the better over the years and I've been watching over him just to be safe."

Rapunzel gave a hesitant smile and went back to the wrapping station and Merida followed shortly behind looking over her shoulder at North and Jack. "What should I do?" Jack asked.

"Help me load up the sleigh. Christmas is tomorrow and after I get

back we'll come up with a plan to deal with Pitch."

* * *

><p>Jack, Merida, Rapunzel, Tempus and the rest of the group worked to help North prepare for his annual flight. Surprisingly nothing happened as they prepared for the holiday or on its eve. Not one attempt was made to attack the Pole or North as he flew around the world, which only caused everyone to be wary for what is coming. For all of the help they had given, North made private rooms for all four of the group to suit all of their needs and were tailored to their own unique tastes and interests. Rapunzel was in her room working on a new piece to hang on the barren violet walls of her room. North was nice enough to provide her with everything she needed to make more pieces of art by practically giving her an entire art studio. It came complete with a painting isle and desk with adjustable lights and a full stock of art supplies ranging from paints to pencils to bundles of brushes. Everything any artist could possibly need North provided to her as a 'Thank you.' At the moment Rapunzel was working on a portrait of Merida as a gift for her old friend but she was interrupted by a knock at the door. Setting her brush down and placing Pascal on her shoulder Rapunzel left her studio and passed through her living room and kitchen to reach the door to be greeted by Merida herself. "Hey we need to talk." She said as Rapunzel motioned for her to enter.<p>

10. Chapter 10

The two of them took a seat on the couch in Rapunzel's living room in an awkward silence as Rapunzel placed Pascal on the coffee table and sat at the other end of the couch. Rapunzel knew what she was there to talk about but tried to ease into the conversation by talking about something else. "Soâ€|how are you liking your room?"

"Don't try to pull that one on me." Merida said as she crossed her arms and leaned back into the cushions of the couch. "We hav to do something about Autumn. Aye don't think aye can fight alongside of 'im! I've gotten over what happened all those years ago but that doesn't mean aye can just go and trust him to watch me back, our backs in a fight!"

"Well what are we supposed to do? If this legend or prophecy is true and Mother Nature is going to be in danger then we need him to defeat Pitch and Gothel. Don't forgot that we're going to need you! You were the only one who was able to beat Mor'du." Rapunzel said as she fiddled with her braid. "What are we supposed to do without either of you on the team?"

"Ah don't know but how are we supposed to fight together when we only formed as a team a week ago? Can we even be called a team?" Merida said as she ran her hands through her curly red locks in frustration at their situation.

"Wellâ€|"

"What is it?" Merida said as she leaned over the side of the couch to try and put her hair back.

Rapunzel got up from the couch slowly twisting her braid nervously

and uttered the next question in a whisper. "What if weâ€¦tried to, I don't knowâ€¦talk to him?"

Merida froze then flipped her hair back in a wild fashion and exclaimed, "We tried that! All of those years ago! Don't you remember what happened?! As soon as we stepped onto that he tried to kill us!"

They both knew the answer to that question. After all they both bore a scar on their back as a reminder of their first encounter. The weather on Berk that day was dark and the wind blew furiously through the trees and abandoned building and the island was quiet. All that could be heard was the creaking of rotting wood, the crashing of waves against the dock and beach and the rustling of leaves from the forests. North had told them not to go to the island or to try and meet Autumn yet but their combined curiosity got the better of them both and they ended up taking two of North's snowballs and went to pay their future comrade a visit. The two of them walked up to the village square and stopped at the memorial boulder but before they could examine it they were pinned to the ground in front of it by the wind. Autumn landed in from of them clad in his leather armor. He kneeled down in front of them examining their every movement as they tried to escape from the force of the wind with his forest green lizard-like eyes. Suddenly and without warning he cut into their backs with a dagger in each hand slowly dragging the blades through their flesh but only deep enough to leave a scar. The two of them screamed out in agony and fear as to what was happening and tried to escape from the pain but suddenlyâ€¦he stopped. He took the daggers and placed them back in their hilts and controlled the wind to release them and ran off into the woods without a word. Merida rushed over to Rapunzel and helped her up and the two of them used the snow globe to open another portal back to the North Pole. As they entered the portal they heard a pained scream from the woods where Autumn had run off to but didn't bother to look back.

When the two of them returned and told North what had happened he didn't scold them for not listening to him while Rapunzel healed their stab wounds. No matter how much they asked for an explanation North said nothing but it was clear to the two of them that he knew something which was one of chilliest factors of all. "Things have changed since then. Bunny and North said so! We might as well as give it a try."

"No!" Merida said, "Besides it's too late to go and try to talk to Autumn, we should just both wait until morning and see what happens."

Merida began to stand up and brush off her jeans as she flipped her hair back to leave and go back to her own room. Rapunzel put her hands on her hips and stared at Merida. She saw that hopeful and determined look in her eyes and knew there was no point in trying to stop her when she made that look. With a huff and a sigh Merida started to walk towards the door and motioned for her to follow and said, "Just stay behind me."

Merida hesitantly knocked on the door and on the third knock the door flew open and Autumn stood in the opening wearing a green t-shirt with a long sleeve white shirt underneath it and a pair of jeans. He was surprised that the two of them were there and said, "What are you guys doing here?"

"We want to talk to ye." Merida said as she pushed him aside and strode into his room without making eye contact with him. Rapunzel followed sheepishly behind her and waved shyly at him as she followed Merida.

"Make yourselves at home, I guess." Autumn said as he scratched at the back of his neck and closed the door.

The three of them sat in a modest living room on black leather couches and chairs as Merida and Rapunzel took in the surroundings. North had mentioned that Autumn had helped him before so it was no surprise that his room was a bit larger but what surprised them most was the décor. Wooden walls had twirling and spiraling patterns from corner to corner and several portraits and designs hung from them. A computer with three monitors sat in the corner on a large desk with a matching chair behind the desk but the most intriguing detail they could see was the lone painting isle sitting in the back partially covered by a sheet. "So what did you two want to talk about so late at night?"

Without missing a beat Merida said, "Why did ye attack us back when we first went to Berk?!"

"Ahâ€¦I knew this was coming sooner or later." Autumn said as he fiddled with his left pants leg for some reason. "To be honest I don't have much of an explanation or an excuse. My home is umâ€¦sacred to me for a lot of reasons and-"

"What is that supposed to mean?!" To the surprise of everyone present it was Rapunzel who cried out. "You attacked us and you don't have anything to say?!"

"Well I-" Autumn said as he looked away and scratched at the back of his neck.

"Do you realize how messed up that was? How, how you scarred us both literally and pretty much destroyed any chances of us trusting you to fight Pitch?" Rapunzel said as her words became more and more heated. "Actually on that topic why are we even here if you have nothing to say?"

Merida placed a hand on her shoulder and pulled her back a bit when she saw Autumn stand up with a dark and serious look in his eyes. Rapunzel stared back into those eyes but instead all she saw was sadness and misery. Autumn stepped closer and closer to the duo as he said, "I'm here for revenge. One of the members of Pitch's new team took everything from me. Tell me something, have you ever had that happen to you? I lost everything to that man in one day including my life. So you don't have to worry about our cooperation. Neither of you have to trust me or care but just know that I am here to fight Pitch and get my revenge. I will fight and help the team but my goal is revenge."

Autumn had ended up backing the two of them to the door and opened it for them to leave. They backed up slowly and stood in the hallway as he closed the door and they made their way back to Rapunzel's room for the rest of the night. The two of them decided that first thing in the morning was to talk to North about teaming up with Autumn.

The Following Morning

Jack and North sat at a large table in North's private study enjoying some cookies delivered by a few of the elves and talking about what was to come. Their conversation was interrupted by a knock at the door followed by Merida and Rapunzel entering the room. Before the two could greet them Rapunzel said, "We don't think Autumn should be on the team. We tried to talk to him last night to try and clear up what happened when we went to Berk. But before we could even start a conversation with him he went off on a rant about revenge and warned us to stay out of his way."

North let out a sigh as he stroked his beard and said, "I'm sorry but he is here to stay as a member of this team. The legend says so but aside from that you need him if you are to have any chance of defeating Pitch and his new teammate Drago."

"Why? Who is this Drago guy?" Merida asked, "Why do we need Autumn to-"

"His name is Hiccup." Jack said as he leaned back in his chair eating a cookie and propping his staff on one of his shoulders.

"Did he tell you that?" Rapunzel asked as she stepped closer to the table.

"Yeah, he did. He also told me why he wants revenge so badly on Drago when we went to bring him back here."

"Well why can't he just say it and why did he want to be called Autumn?"

North spoke this time and said, "It's not my place to tell you. All of you had difficult lives but it's only best for you to share what happened in them. Aut-Hiccup, I mean, has to share his own story but only when he is ready."

"But he already knew about us before we met because of workin' and helpin' yah, so how is that fair? North tell us what happened to him!" Merida said as she sat down in a chair at the table waiting for him to start.

"Please North?" Rapunzel asked as she took a seat next to Merida. "We have to know."

North opened his mouth but closed it and a small gust of wind rushed through the room. Hiccup walked into the room and said, "North won't tell you because he promised me but if you two really want to know I can tell you."

"Hiccup are you sure you want to tell them now?" North asked as he rose from his seat and approached him.

"I'd rather be a part of a team that can trust me when we go into a fight. They deserve to know." Hiccup said as he walked past North and took a seat at the end of the table and nodded to North who nodded back with a sympathetic smile and left the room, closing the door behind him to give the group some privacy.

The four sat at the table in silence for what felt like an eternity until Hiccup broke the silence and said, "What do you know about dragons?"

11. Chapter 11

Pitch watched from high above as his army prepared for battle with a sinister smile on his face. Hundreds of men and women of hulking stature were waiting to return to the battlefield, all that was needed was a chief to lead them. This was something that surprised Pitch to no end. He had not expected for his new soldiers to be so stubborn even in a revived state and infused with black sand to become stronger yet easier to control, they still refused to follow Pitch's orders because he was not their chief. Luckily, Drago had provided the perfect candidate all she needed was a special batch of black sand. Together with a few spells and specially seasoned ingredients provided by Gothel the new chief would be a perfect asset to the coming battles at least until his goals are met. "Bring her in." Pitch said to Drago who left with a low growl.

Shortly after a young woman entered the room with a cautious, calculated gaze in her eyes as she approached Pitch. "Why am I here?"

"Tell me young lady, how would you like to be the new chief of your people?" Pitch said as waved his arm over the people below. "You all know why you were brought back but someone needs to lead your people on the battlefield."

"And I was the most obvious choice because you are too much of a coward to do it yourself?"

No sooner had the words left her mouth, a shadowy hand emerged from her own shadow and lifted her from the ground by the throat. The grip on her throat became tighter and tighter as she tried desperately to gasp for air and clawed furiously at the shadowy hand to try and break free but to no avail as her hands passed through the shadow. "Watch your tongue, girl. I am the master of nightmares and fear. I can do a countless number of things to put you into an endless state of cowardice and fear. You're lucky I have need of your abilities or else I would have Drago end your pathetic existence again." With that the shadow hand threw her to the ground and she began gasping for air as Pitch knelt down in front of her. "Do you understand?"

Astrid backed up against the wall and nodded slowly, "What am I supposed to do?"

Pitch pulled her to her feet and began walking to the balcony overlooking her people. Placing a hand on her shoulder he pushed her towards the railing but before she could look back at him Astrid was blasted by Pitch's special batch of black sand. Astrid felt a surge of power and energy course through her veins as a dark energy radiated off of her body. Only the power started to burn and sting all along her back. The pain became so great that she fell to her knees again while she gripped the railing of the balcony as if her life depended on it. She cried out in agony as her grip became tighter and broke the railing and two black demonic wings sprung from her back made of black, withering feathers. Pitch walked up beside her and laid an axe beside her and turned to leave the room. Astrid

took the axe in her hand and raised it above her head with a mighty yell to which the other Vikings from below cried out in return.

12. Chapter 12

Each tick of the second hand on the clock nearby felt like a millennia for the girls as Hiccup told his tale in great detail. He told them everything that happened to him starting with the fateful night that he shot down the Nightfury that would eventually become one of his best friends and his dragon riding partner. He told the story of how he and Toothless took down the Red Death with the help of his friends and he showed his missing foot as evidence to the tale. Rapunzel began to weep when he described how Drago killed his father by using Toothless and Merida looked a little choked up when he described how nervous he was to fire his flaming arrow at the funeral. When Hiccup got to the part about becoming the new chief and Toothless taking on the role of the Alpha after defeating Drago, Jack put his hood up knowing what came next in the course of events.

"The peace we worked for came and my people were happy, unfortunately it was only for two short years. During that time we managed to rebuild the village and reestablish our normal way of living. Our village prospered under the council of myself, my mother, friends, mentor—and my bride, Astrid. One fateful day during a particularly brutal storm Drago and his newly assembled armada attacked and destroyed a fourth of the village before we could even place a finger on our blades. He hit us hard during that first wave and somehow his troops managed to slaughter most of our dragons—including Toothless. He never said why but I guess that if he couldn't capture and control the dragons then he didn't want anyone to have them. With the Alpha dragon dead the surviving dragons were scattered, disoriented and confused; if they weren't interested that is. Sadly the same could be said about the Vikings who survived the initial attack."

"What did ye do?" Merida asked as she nervously twisted a silver ring on her finger.

"I led my people the best that I could. We gathered all the weapons and able bodied people that we could and I rallied them to the Great Hall. My closest friends, advisors, and my wife all helped to develop a plan so we could counter attack Drago's forces. I won't bore you with the details of planning our attack so I'll skip ahead to the climax of the battle. After a few hours the storm had gotten worse so we used that to our advantage as best as we could. The rain made it nearly impossible to see and the wind severely limited our maneuverability to quickly dodge attacks in the middle of a fight so we used that to turn the tables. The rain became our camouflage as we hid behind buildings and trees and waited for our perfect opportunity to strike. When we attacked we made sure our attacks were fatal and disappeared using the rain. The wind restricted our enemies as well as us so we used it to pick off the stragglers one by one using stealth. This allowed us to fight them back to the shoreline and dwindle their numbers enough to equal that of our own. But Drago's initial attack began to take its toll on our remaining forces and he knew it. We were tired and struggling to hold the front on the beach we had worked so hard to gain. Several of my closest friends found me amongst the chaos of the battle and told me where Drago was so we

rushed over to him with all of our strength. If we found him we knew that we could end him and the nightmare that he had brought to our peaceful island. What I didn't know was once the nightmare ended and the storm ceased the damage he caused could never be undone."

Hiccup paused and took a deep breath and walked over to the window looking out over the icy tundra. The snow capped hills and icy sheets on the ground blurred before his eyes as he continued his tale and he found himself on the battlefield again as if he had never left. He could feel the mist from the waves as they violently crashed on the sand as well as the blood that had been soaked into each individual grain. The bodies and weapons of friends, foes, and dragons alike were scattered across the dunes of the beach staring at him with hollow eyes. "We crossed the dunes to reach Drago but we lost one after another until it was only me left to face him. What I didn't know was that my best friend and newlywed bride, Astrid, was already locked in combat with him. I jumped in and fought by her side against him and his remaining soldiers working together in perfect harmony since we had fought beside one another for so many years. Astrid struck him down with a strike across the chest with her favorite battle axe but as she turned her attention to the remaining forces Drago got back up and ended her life in one strike. He smiled as he did it and laughed at her scream of agony. I watched her fall to her knees as the blood rushed from her wound and as she fell forward she looked at me and smiled then the light fled from her eyes. Something snapped in me and I blacked out and when I awoke Drago and his forces were dead and I sat on the beach cradling my wife in my arms as her heart beat for the last time."

Hiccup snapped out of his trance and turned back to look at the others. Rapunzel had tears streaming down her face smearing her makeup and Merida was misty eyed but managed to hold back the tears. "I used the last of my strength to give all of my people a proper burial by our customs and placed a memorial stone in the center of town for them to be remembered, both dragons and their riders. The rain continued to pour down on me as I placed their weapons around the stone and carved their names into the rock, the drops of rain fell on my wounds and caused my blood to soak into the ground. When I was at my limit I looked up into the clouds and prayed for just another moment to live to finish the memorial and it seems that the gods heard me. I looked back at the stone at Astrid's name and I took my chisel and left my name right next to hers. When I finished I dropped it and fell to the ground staring up at the heavens as the blood rushed from my wounds and was carried away by the rain water. I waited and waited for what felt like an eternity for the Valkyries to take me. Instead somethingâ€|different happened. The rain ceased and the clouds parted to reveal thousands upon thousands of stars shining down on me and the moon was in the center of the sky and mentioned something about waiting a little longer. I didn't know that by "a little longer" he meant several hundred years."

Hiccup sat back down in his seat with a goofy grin on his face and scratched the back of his neck nervously saying, "That should bring us to the present day. Sorry if I made things a little tense."

Jack chuckled and removed his hood saying, "Oh don't worry just made it a wee bit tense. I'm sure nobody got emotionally scarred from hearing your story."

To which Hiccup replied with a laugh and said, "I'd hope not. I lived

it and the scars I got still hurt from time to time."

"This is personal for you, that's why you're so serious about taking on Drago and Pitch," Rapunzel said wiping the tears and makeup away. Merida had already regained her composure and sat back in her chair silently.

"That's good an' all but how di we know ye can be trusted in a fight?" Merida asked crossing her arms across her chest as she got up and walked to the head of the table. She stopped at the corner and leaned against it staring at Hiccup with a suspicious glare.

"Merida be nice! We're all on the same team now!" Rapunzel said as she rose from her seat slamming her hands down on the table.

"Just because we're on the same side doesn't mean aye can trust 'im just like that."

Hiccup spoke up and said, "Let me give you a reason to trust me."

Their attention focused back on him as he reached under the collar of his shirt and grabbed a leather necklace. He closed his hands around the charms of the necklace keeping them covered from the view of the others. Snapping the necklace from his neck he grabbed the charms and placed them on the table for all to see. There on the table were three hand carved wooden charms; one was made of a light shade of wood in the form of a double-sided axe blade, the second was a darker shade and carved in the shape of a hammer, the third was made of the darkest wood and carved to resemble a horn. Hiccup caught the leather cord into three segments and attached one to each piece of leather and tossed them to the others. Merida got the axe, Rapunzel opened her hand and found the horn, leaving Jack with the hammer. "An' just what are these?" Merida asked closely examining the bracelet.

"Each of these were carved by Astrid before she died. These are the only things I have left of her and our old lifeâ€|they are my most prized possessions. I trust you three to keep these safe for me until we defeat Pitch," Hiccup said.

The attention fell on Merida as the other waited for her to reply before placing the bracelets on their wrists. Her eyes examined Hiccup closely, looking for any signs to give her a reason not to trust him. After another moment passed she placed the bracelet on her wrist and extended her hand towards Hiccup in friendship. The two smiled and shook hands while Rapunzel and Jack chuckled and put their bracelets on. North smiled as he watched the exchange from the crack in the doorway. Quietly he walked back to his private study where the other Guardians waited in a nervous silence. Their eyes focused on him as he entered the room and waited for him to speak. North eased their nerves with a smile and his thumbs up and said, "Now we get to work."

13. Chapter 13

Deep underground, beneath miles of stone and dirt Pitch sat upon the ruins of a throne of a long forgotten kingdom. Centuries ago this was a kingdom of great peace and prosperity in a world that was ravaged by war between neighboring kingdoms. However for all of the

achievements, advancements, and victories this kingdom had none were remembered and have been forgotten with the passage of time. It stands as a sad example of how the center of a nation can fall into obscurity as it fails to stand the test of time and crumbles into dust beneath the people's feet. Several natural disasters helped to secure its place in oblivion as wildfires ravaged the forests and spread to the town destroying important buildings and businesses. The earthquakes demolished the roads making it impossible to leave or enter the borders of the kingdom. The sea turned against them and flooded the ports and spread to the city but as the water receded back into the ocean the earth combined forces with the water and submerged the castle with one last landslide. Combining several natural disasters over the course of a century or two and only a little bit more time for the inhabitants to die off from the disasters, starvation, and disease only helped the memory of the kingdom once called Arendelle, to disappear from history. In the modern era the only way to find or reach it was to know about it, and when you're an immortal spirit, knowledge like that gives you the upper hand. Gothel, Drago, and Mor'du sat scattered throughout the throne room illuminated only by the torches and fire conjured by Gothel. They sat in decrepit and rotten pews that were in the room facing towards the throne elevated above them all by a few wooden steps that were in the same state as the pews. A few portraits and banners were torn and laid unceremoniously on the floor among bones of the dead, shards of glass from the castle's broken windows and layers of dust. The windows that weren't broken in from the natural disasters were shattered by the roots of the trees that grew to create the new forest above them and allowed no light to pass through them, only piles of rocks and soil to spill onto the faded and broken throne room floor. Rubble and debris from the columns fell onto the floor creating cracks and holes that leads to the other rooms but were completely shrouded in darkness. Pitch looked up at the faded paintings of the Arendelle royal crest and chuckled then turned his attention back to the matter at hand. Two crowns were broken and rusted at Pitch's feet. Gothel took a breath and used her magic to levitate both of them closer to herself as she examined them in the light.

The first crown was the larger of the two and crafted with great detail but was broken into two pieces and had succumbed to rust. The second crown upon closer inspection was smaller and made with a different type of metal but it was impossible to identify due to the rust and dents that had damaged it beyond repair. This presented no challenge to Gothel who smirked as she finished her appraisal and waved her hands again to repair the crowns. The metal of both priceless artifacts glowed in the fire light as the rust faded away and the polish of the gold and silver became more apparent to the group. While the gold crown and silver tiara hovered in the air the dust on the floor were drawn to the centerpiece of each one and formed two shimmering gems that completed each royal artifact and fully restored them to their former glory. The larger gold crown received a blue sapphire that played tricks with the light to appear as if it changed its shade from the blue of a vast ocean to the lightest shade of a clear winter sky. In comparison to the larger crown, the smaller silver tiara displayed a circular orange gemstone that intensified in the light of the torches. More and more particles of dust rose from the floor and began to intertwine between the bands of metal until they were fully encased. Two swirling rings began to form and the dust started to pile together until they met with the crowns separately. One flick of Gothel's wrist caused the dust to

become more compact until they were as hard as diamond and they both rose further from the ground until they reached the appropriate heights. When all was said and done you could say at first glance that they were two large cocoons but upon further inspection you could see small beads of light trying to escape from them but the dust continued to sway in its strange crystalloid form. Gothel lowered her hand and smiled at her work and approached the two structures but as she did so she drew her favorite dagger from its sheath which was strapped to her hip. She raised the dagger above her head in her right hand and placed an enchantment upon the dagger and slid its blade across her wrist. A sharp hiss escaped her lips but she grinned in satisfaction when the entire dagger began to shimmer in a light blue hue. Without a moment's hesitation she plunged the entire blade of the dagger into each of the dusty cocoons with a great amount of ease. Gothel removed her dagger and placed it back in its sheath and healed her wrist with a quick incantation and stepped back to stand near Pitch. The echo of her heels and the faint roar of the torches were the only sounds to be heard, Drago attempted to break the silence but as he opened his mouth Pitch raised his hand to silence him as he intensely gazed at the cocoons.

The puncture wounds of the cocoons began to glow in the same hue as Gothel's enchantment and radiated outwards outshining the faint torch light. Cracks started to spread from the indent left by the knife which allowed more light to escape from within in the cocoons until large sections of the dust began to fall away. The light that was uncovered blinded those in the room until the light finally died down. The Dark Guardians looked at where the dusty cocoons once stood and found that they had been replaced by a pair of crystal caskets. Both of them were a light shade of blue but were covered in a small layer of ash and dirt yet the light from the torches danced upon their surfaces. Drago pierced his spear into the ground, firmly planting it there as he used his good arm to wipe away some of the ash. His expression changed into one of surprise as a young woman with strawberry blonde hair was revealed to be encased in the crystal. Her eyes were closed and she wore a peaceful expression. Drago moved to the second one and found another woman with platinum blonde hair who appeared to be a few years older than the previous woman yet her skin was much paler, as if it was made of ice and snow.

Drago grabbed his spear and tapped one of the crystals and said, "I assume this is what we were really after?"

"Yes." Pitch said as he rose from the decrepid throne and approached the crystal caskets. "We came for a weapon. If we're going to fight the Guardians for a treasure of Mother Nature then we need to harness some of nature's power. This is how we change the rules of the game and tip the scales in our favor."

Pitch stopped in front of the older woman and grinned. "But nature won't obey and heed the orders of anyone; no matter how much one howls their commands to the wind. It will never yield." He paused then turned his gaze towards the other casket and stepped in front of it gazing at the younger woman and said, "That is why you need leverage. Isn't that right? Queen Anna?"

as well as the skeletons that once wore them with pride when they were in power. With the wave of his wrist, Gothel used her magic and the skeletons were enveloped in green fire and with a flash of light

the skeletons were gone and replaced by two young women in tattered gowns.

End
file.